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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4336  
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE  
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 9826  
RUEHDR/AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM 5723  
RUEHDJ/AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI 5044  
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2558  
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 1830  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 2591  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 2517  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA  
RUCQSOC/USCINCSOC MACDILL AFB FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 000235

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FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/22/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KE](#)

SUBJECT: KENYA'S ELECTORAL CRISIS - THE SPEAKER OF  
PARLIAMENT'S KEY ROLE

REF: A. NAIROBI 200

[1](#)B. NAIROBI 185

[1](#)C. NAIROBI 13

Classified By: Ambassador Ranneberger, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) I met with the new Speaker of the Parliament, Kenneth Marende, on January 18 to congratulate him on his election and to discuss the role he can play to help resolve the election crisis.

[1](#)2. (C) I briefed Marende on U.S. efforts to assist in resolution of the crisis. Marende noted that in his acceptance speech two days before, he emphasized the positive role that Parliament can play in helping the country return to normal. His speech also stressed the need for compromise by both sides. Marende urged the U.S. to remain strongly engaged, saying that we are crucial to a solution through our influence with both sides, and as Kenya's key global partner. Parliament can specifically help, Marende said, by creating an enabling environment.<sup>8</sup> He pointed out, for example, that most of the Parliamentarians on both sides are young, bright, and moderate. Parliament can provide a forum for formal and informal discussions across party lines. (With Marende's blessing, UNDP is helping fund within the next week or so, a retreat for all the parliamentarians to promote dialogue.)

[1](#)3. (C) Without indicating his own bottom lines, Marende emphasized his view that both sides will have to compromise in order to achieve a viable political solution. He made clear that he appreciates his responsibility to play a major role in helping achieve this, and said he plans to be in close touch with both the President and Raila Odinga. Marende emphasized that agreement on constitutional and electoral reform must be a major part of a political solution. In that regard, he pointed out that he chaired the ODM legal and constitutional review team before being elected Speaker.

[1](#)4. (C) Marende expressed appreciation for ongoing U.S. support to strengthen Parliament, particularly by bolstering the committee system. He expressed interest in meeting with the U.S. team working with Parliament soon in order to focus on next steps.

15. (C) Comment. The Speaker exercises a great deal of power to control the parliamentary agenda. His objective rulings -) despite being the ODM candidate -- during the parliamentary session to elect a Speaker impressed the government side. Marende has a solid legal background and is well-placed to help promote dialogue between Kibaki,s Party of National Unity and Odinga,s Orange Democratic Movement. The President will have to work with Marende if he wants to advance his legislative agenda, much of which remained pending at the conclusion of the last parliamentary session. We expect Parliament to convene in early March.  
RANNEBERGER